

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A stratified press fabric for the press section of a paper machine, comprising:
  - a base fabric in the form of an endless loop having an outer side  
5 and an inner side;
  - a first batt layer attached to the outer side of said base fabric;
  - a fine fabric covering said first batt layer; and
  - a second batt layer attached to said fine fabric;

wherein said first batt layer has staple fiber batt material that is  
10 coarser and of a first color different than said second batt layer; said  
first color indicating wear when said second batt layer is worn such  
that the first batt layer is exposed.
2. The stratified press fabric according to claim 1, wherein said  
15 fine fabric is a second color different than said second batt layer; said second  
color indicating wear when said second batt layer is worn such that the fine  
fabric is exposed.
3. The stratified press fabric according to claim 1, further  
20 comprising a plurality of batt layers between said base fabric and said fine  
fabric; said plurality of batt layers having at least one layer of said first color  
for indicating wear.
4. The stratified press fabric according to claim 1, wherein said  
25 first color is only visible in ultraviolet light.
5. The stratified press fabric according to claim 1, wherein said  
fine fabric limits transfer of staple fiber batt material between said first and  
second batt layers.  
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6. A stratified press fabric for the press section of a paper  
machine, said press fabric comprising:

a base support structure, said base support structure being in the form of an endless loop and having an outer side and an inner side;

5 a first staple fiber batt material attached to said outer side of said base support structure, said first staple fiber batt material comprising a plurality of first staple fibers of a first color;

a fine fabric, said fine fabric covering said first staple fiber batt material on said outer side of said base support structure; and

10 a second staple fiber batt material attached to said fine fabric, said second staple fiber batt material comprising a plurality of second staple fibers of a second color different than said first color, said second staple fibers being finer than said first staple fibers;

wherein said first color indicates wear when said second staple fiber batt material is worn such that the first staple fiber batt material is exposed;

15 wherein said fine fabric limits transfer of said first staple fibers and said second staple fibers therethrough and intermingling of said first staple fibers and said second staple fibers.

7. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6 wherein said base  
20 support structure is a fabric selected from the group consisting of woven, nonwoven, nonwoven arrays of MD or CD oriented yarns, knitted and braided fabrics.

8. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 7 wherein said base  
25 support structure is an extruded mesh fabric.

9. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said base support structure is a strip of material spirally wound in a plurality of turns, each turn being joined to those adjacent thereto by a continuous seam,  
30 said base support structure being endless in a longitudinal direction, said strip material being selected from the group consisting of woven fabrics, nonwoven fabrics, knitted fabrics, braided fabrics and extruded mesh fabrics.

10. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said base support structure is an on-machine-seamable fabric.
- 5 11. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said fine fabric is a fabric selected from the group consisting of woven, nonwoven, knitted and braided fabrics.
- 10 12. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 11, wherein said fine fabric is an extruded mesh fabric.
- 15 13. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said fine fabric is a strip material spirally wound in a plurality of turns, each turn being joined to those adjacent thereto by a continuous seam, said fine fabric being endless in a longitudinal direction, said strip material being selected from the group consisting of woven fabrics, nonwoven fabrics, knitted fabrics, braided fabrics and extruded mesh fabrics.
- 20 14. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said fine fabric is an endless fabric.
- 25 15. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said first staple fibers have a first diameter and said second staple fibers have a second diameter which is smaller than said first diameter.
- 30 16. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said first staple fibers have a first cross-sectional size and said second staple fibers have a second cross-sectional size which is smaller than said first cross-sectional size.
17. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said fine fabric has openings no larger than 0.50 mm in any dimension, so that said first

staple fibers are not driven therethrough when said stratified press fabric is needled from said inner side of said base support structure.

18. A stratified press fabric as claimed in claim 6, wherein said support structure is comprised of two or more bases selected from the group consisting of woven, nonwoven, nonwoven arrays of MD or CD yarns, knitted, braided, extruded meshes of film structures.